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MARK MILLAR • TERRY DODSON • RACHEL DODSON
SPIDER-MAN®
THE LAST STAND
2 of 4
TERRY
RACHEL
Laura

PREVIOUSLY IN SPIDER-MAN

"LAST STAND"

PART II OF IV

His beloved Aunt May has been kidnapped, his secret identity has been compromised, and now Peter Parker has been delivered an ultimatum, courtesy of Mac Gargan, a.k.a. The Scorpion: either he breaks his arch-foe, Norman Osborn, out of Riker's Island prison... or May dies.

It appears that Osborn is at the heart of a conspiracy involving super-humans that dates back more than 60 years, and this secret has put his life at risk. If Osborn isn't freed soon, he will be murdered in his jail cell.

Peter, already on the brink of a mental and physical collapse, refuses. He's not a criminal-- he won't break the law. But if his only hope of saving his Aunt May is to free Norman....what choice does he really have?

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THE LAST STAND

PART TWO OF FOUR

MARK MILLAR WRITER
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VC'S CORY PETIT LETTERS
AVALON'S IAN HANNIN COLORS
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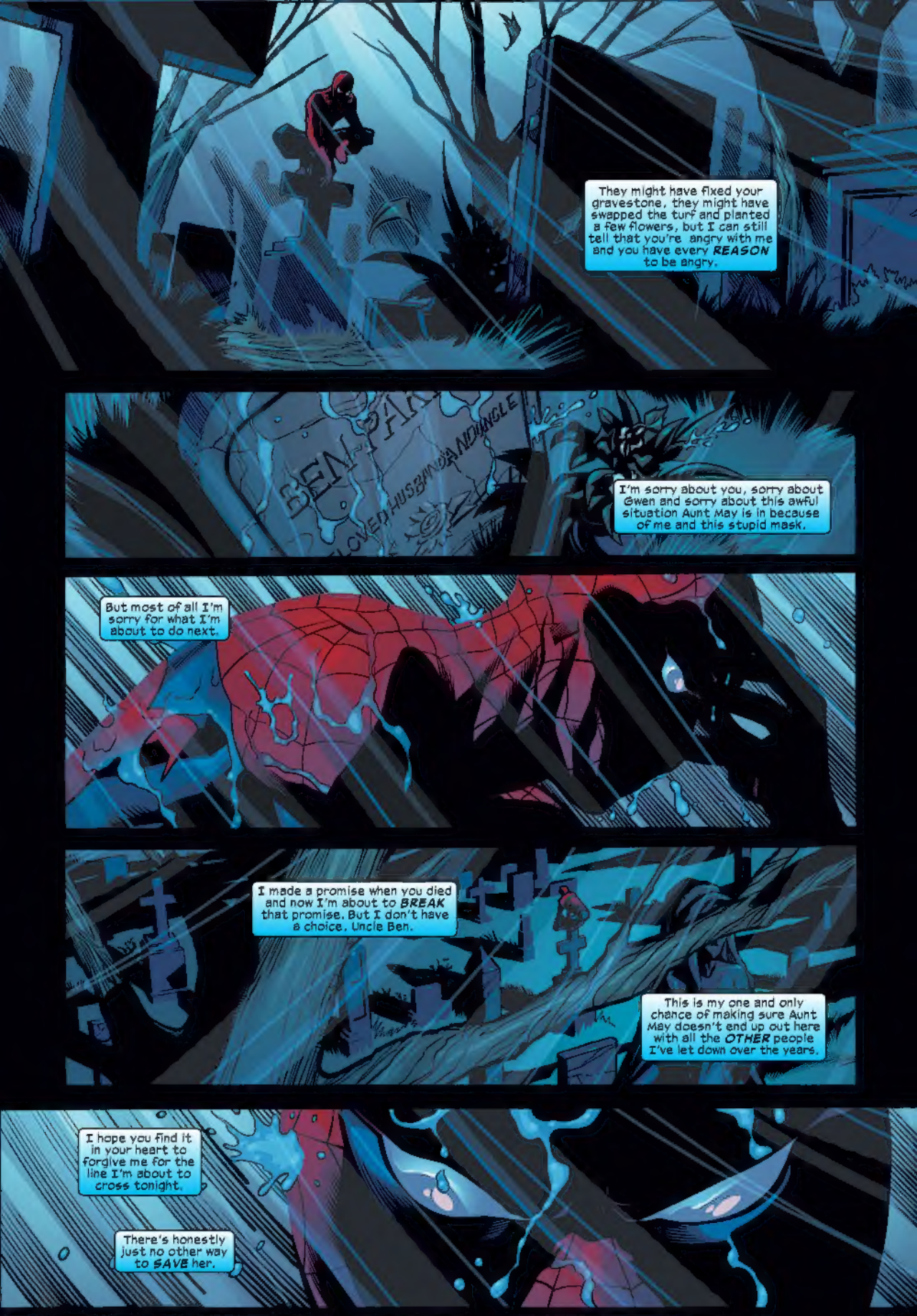

They might have fixed your gravestone, they might have swapped the turf and planted a few flowers, but I can still tell that you're angry with me and you have every REASON to be angry.
I'm sorry about you, sorry about Gwen and sorry about this awful situation Aunt May is in because of me and this stupid mask.
But most of all I'm sorry for what I'm about to do next.
I made a promise when you died and now I'm about to BREAK that promise. But I don't have a choice, Uncle Ben.
This is my one and only chance of making sure Aunt May doesn't end up out here with all the OTHER people I've let down over the years.
I hope you find it in your heart to forgive me for the line I'm about to cross tonight.
There's honestly just no other way to SAVE her.

HUUURRKK!

MJ, PLEASE. I'M FEELING BAD ENOUGH ABOUT THIS AS IT IS.
PTUI!
AND SO YOU SHOULD. WHAT DO YOU EXPECT ME TO *DO* HERE, PETER? SHAKE YOUR *HAND?*

YOU'RE BREAKING SOMEBODY OUT OF *PRISON*, FOR GOD'S SAKE. YOU'RE BREAKING *THE GREEN GOBLIN* OUT OF PRISON.
IT'S LIKE THE SCORPION SAID: IF I BREAK HIM OUT, THERE'S ALWAYS THE RISK THAT SOMEBODY'S GOING TO GET HURT. BUT IF I DON'T BREAK HIM OUT, IT'S AN ABSOLUTE GUARANTEE.
THIS IS THE ONE AND ONLY WAY HE'S GOING TO SHOW ME WHERE HE'S LOCKED UP AUNT MAY.

BESIDES, PETER'S THE ONLY REASON OSBORN'S EVEN *IN* PRISON, RIGHT? IF HE BREAKS HIM OUT, ALL HE'S DOING IS RETURNING THINGS TO THE WAY THEY WERE THREE MONTHS AGO.
WHAT KIND OF STUPID JUSTIFICATION IS THAT? AND SINCE WHEN DID WE START TAKING ADVICE FROM SOMEBODY WHO DRESSES UP LIKE A CAT AND *BURGLARIZES* PEOPLE?

I HAVEN'T BURGLARIZED ANYBODY IN *EIGHTEEN MONTHS.*
OH, SHUT UP, FELICIA. THINGS ARE COMPLICATED ENOUGH WITHOUT YOU HANGING AROUND. WHY DON'T YOU JUST GO AND FIND YOURSELF A *BOYFRIEND*, HUH?
MARY JANE!

I'M SORRY, BUT IT'S TRUE. EVERY TIME SHE SHOWS UP, SHE TURNS OUR LIVES UPSIDE DOWN. OF COURSE SHE THINKS IT'S A GOOD IDEA. SHE USED TO SLEEP IN THE NEXT CELL OVER.
PETER, I'M NOT TRYING TO INTERFERE, BUT WE'RE ON A TIGHT SCHEDULE HERE AND DON'T HAVE TIME FOR ALL THIS GARBAGE.
CAN'T YOU SEE WHAT OSBORN'S DOING, PETER? HE'S JUST PULLING THE STRINGS AND MAKING YOU DANCE LIKE AN IDIOT AGAIN. HE'S EVEN TRYING TO RUIN THINGS BETWEEN YOU AND ME NOW.
PLEASE DON'T DO THIS.
PLEASE... HE'S TOO SMART.
IT'S DIFFERENT THIS TIME. DOCTOR OCTOPUS HAS BEEN BRAINWASHED TO KILL HIM THIS WEEKEND AND HE'S VULNERABLE FOR THE FIRST TIME IN HIS LIFE.
HE PROMISED ME HE'D BEHAVE AND, FOR SOME REASON, I THINK HE'S TOO SCARED TO BE LYING THIS TIME.
BESIDES... THERE'S NO OTHER WAY TO SAVE AUNT MAY.
I'M SORRY.

PLEASE, GOD, LET ME BE WRONG ABOUT ALL THIS...

RIKER'S ISLAND PENITENTIARY:

WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO ONCE HE'S OUT THERE AGAIN? ABOUT YOUR SECRET IDENTITY, I MEAN. HOW ARE YOU GOING TO MAKE SURE NOTHING LIKE THIS EVER HAPPENS IN THE FUTURE?
WITNESS PROTECTION PROGRAM.
WHAT?
ONCE I GET AUNT MAY BACK, I'M GIVING SPIDER-MAN UP, TELLING THE COPS WHO I AM, AND THE WHOLE FAMILY IS GOING INTO THE WITNESS PROTECTION PROGRAM.
SERIOUSLY?
WHAT ELSE AM I GOING TO DO? THIS JUST PROVES IT'S TOO DANGEROUS TO MESS AROUND ANYMORE.
THANKS FOR PUTTING THESE OUTFITS TOGETHER, BY THE WAY. THEY'RE NICE AND LOOSE SO IT'S HARD TO EVEN MAKE OUT WHAT SIZE WE ARE. JUST NEED TO REMEMBER NOT TO USE MY WEB-SHOOTERS.
DID I TELL YOU I WAS GOING TO MAKE US DAREDEVIL AND ELEKTRA COSTUMES? JUST TO GET A RISE OUT OF MATT?
OH, MAN. THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN PRICELESS. CAN YOU IMAGINE THEIR FACES? THEY'D HAVE GONE ABSOLUTELY NUTS.
GOD, HOW CAN I LAUGH AT A TIME LIKE THIS?
PETER, BEFORE WE DO THIS--I JUST WANT TO SAY SOMETHING.
S'UP?

I JUST WANT YOU TO REALIZE I'M READY TO DO THIS BY MYSELF IF YOU DON'T WANT TO CROSS THIS LINE.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
WELL, YOU'RE A MUCH BETTER PERSON THAN I AM, PETER. I'M NOT BEING MODEST HERE. YOU JUST ARE AND WE BOTH KNOW IT.
YOU'RE ALSO A SUPER HERO AND, AS MUCH AS I'M TRYING, I'M NEVER REALLY GOING TO BE ONE OF THE GOOD GUYS LIKE YOU OR CAPTAIN AMERICA OR THE FANTASTIC FOUR.
I JUST DON'T WANT YOU TO COMPROMISE EVERYTHING I LOVE ABOUT YOU WHEN I COULD DO THIS BY MYSELF.
MY CONSCIENCE COULD HANDLE A JOB LIKE THIS, BUT I'M NOT SURE YOURS CAN. I JUST DON'T WANT YOU DOING SOMETHING YOU'LL REGRET FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE.
ARE YOU SERIOUS?
A HUNDRED PERCENT SERIOUS.
C'MON, LET'S GO SEE IF THE SCORPION'S PLANS FOR THIS PLACE ARE AS GOOD AS THEY LOOKED ON PAPER.

LISTEN NOBODY'S ASKING YOU TO DO ANYTHING ILLEGAL HERE, HAYDN. ALL WE'RE ASKING YOU TO DO IS LOOK THE OTHER WAY FOR A SECOND
YOU CAN SAY YOU WERE ON ANOTHER TOILET-BREAK. JUST BLAME IT ON YOUR PROSTATITIS.
I DUNNO, MAN. I MEAN, MY HEART GOES OUT TO SCOTTY AND EVERYTHING, BUT I GOT A WIFE AND KIDS TO THINK ABOUT. IF I LOSE THIS JOB...
YOU'RE NOT GONNA LOSE YOUR JOB, HAYDN. WE'RE THE ONES PULLING THE TRIGGERS DOWN THERE. ALL WE'RE ASKING YOU TO DO IS LOOK THE OTHER WAY, FOR GOD'S SAKES
BESIDES, YOU REALLY THINK WE AIN'T GONNA BE HEROES AFTER THIS? HOW MANY PEOPLE HAS OSBORN KILLED? THEY'LL END UP GIVING US A FRIGGIN' MEDAL FOR PULLING THIS OFF
BUT I GOT A WIFE...
SCOTTY HAD A WIFE TOO UNTIL THAT PIECE OF CRAP POISONED HER AND PUT HER IN THE GROUND.
IT'S HIS FIRST NIGHT BACK SINCE THE FUNERAL, HAYDN, AND HE REALLY NEEDS US TO HELP HIM OUT HERE, MAN
WHAT'S A RIFLE GONNA DO TO OSBORN ANYWAY? HIS SKIN'S SUPPOSED TO BE BULLETPROOF, RIGHT?
SOME BULLETS ARE BETTER THAN OTHERS, BUDDY. THESE NEW ASSAULT RIFLES WE BEEN ISSUED TOOK A CHUNK OUTTA THE RHINO'S BUTT JUST LAST WEEK.

WHAT'S THE WORD?
GOOD TO GO PETER. I'VE PAUSED ALL THE SECURITY CAMERAS ACROSS THE ROUTE THE SCORPION LAID OUT FOR YOU.
TRIP-SENSORS GAVE ME A LITTLE TROUBLE, BUT YOU'RE CLEAR TO TOUCH THE WALLS AND FLOOR FOR AT LEAST ANOTHER TWENTY MINUTES.
I DIDN'T KNOW YOU WERE SUCH AN EGGHEAD, MISS KYLE
BENEFITS OF A GOOD CATHOLIC SCHOOL EDUCATION, MISTER PARKER. THE SCORPION'S SCHEMATIC WORKING OUT FOR YOU DOWN THERE?
RIGHT DOWN TO THE SMALLEST DETAIL. MAN, IS THAT BLACKIE DRAGO IN THERE?
I HAVEN'T SEEN HIM SINCE HE WAS DOING THE WHOLE VULTURE THING A FEW YEARS BACK. IS HE STILL LOCKED UP?
WE REALLY MEET SOME INTERESTING PEOPLE IN THIS JOB, DON'T WE?
TELL ME ABOUT IT.

CAN I GET A LITTLE LIGHT IN OSBORN'S CELL?
COMING RIGHT UP...
I HOPE YOU REALIZE YOU'RE NINETY SECONDS BEHIND SCHEDULE?
JUST SHUT UP AND GET OUT OF THERE BEFORE I CHANGE MY MIND.

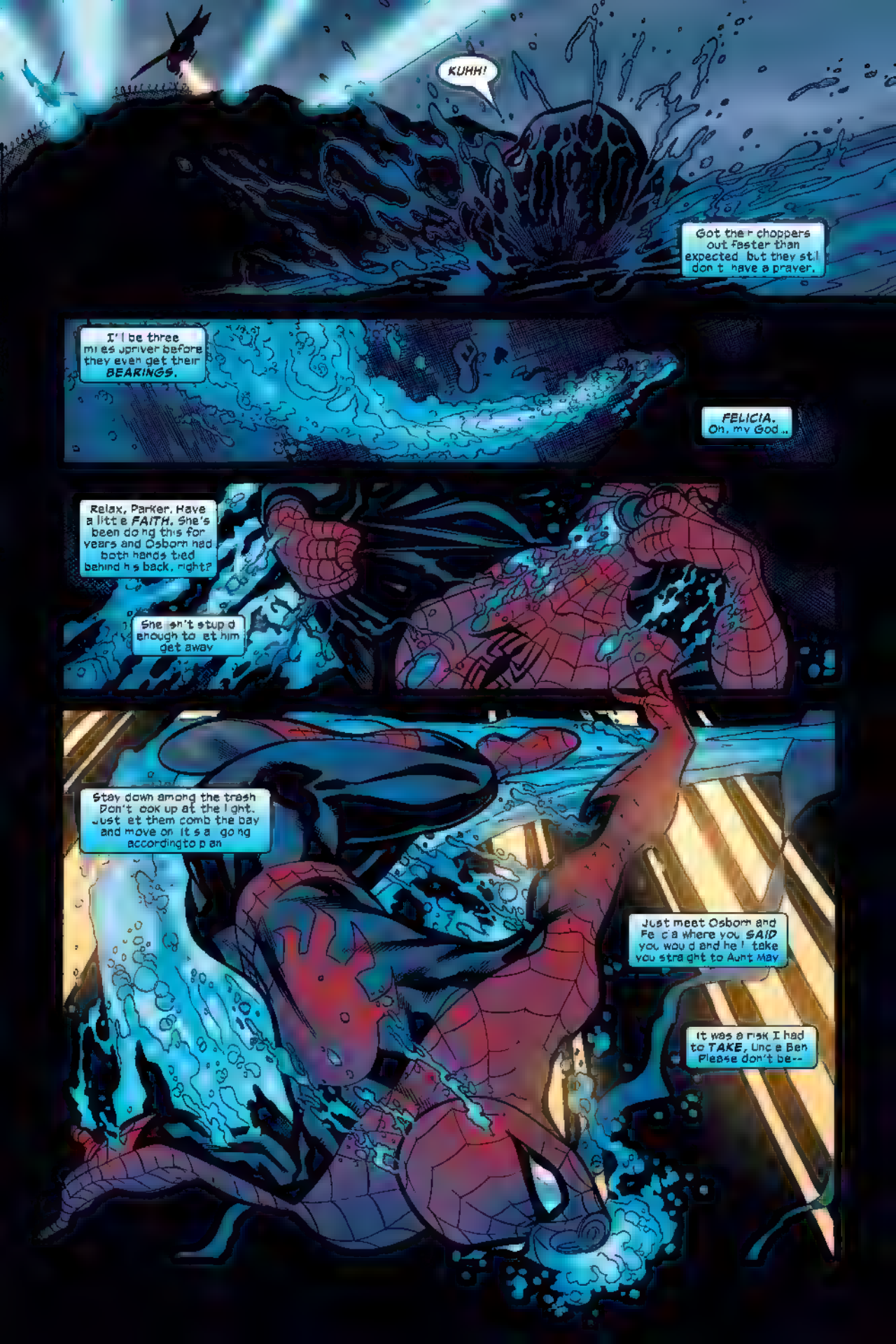
WANT TO LET YOU KNOW HOW MUCH I APPRECIATE THIS, GUYS. THE WARDEN SAID I COULD TAKE ANOTHER COUPLE OF MONTHS IF I LIKE, BUT WHAT GOOD'S LYING AROUND THE HOUSE GONNA DO ME?
I GOTTA DO SOMETHING POSITIVE IF I'M GONNA FEEL BETTER AND WHAT COULD BE MORE POSITIVE THAN EMPTYING A SHELL RIGHT IN THE FACE OF THAT PIECE OF CRAP SLEEPING IN THERE?
DOESN'T MATTER WHAT HAPPENS TO ME AFTERWARDS. NOTHING'S GONNA MAKE ME FEEL WORSE THAN I FEEL NOW ANYWAY.
JUST REMEMBER, WE'RE RIGHT BEHIND YOU, SCOTTY. MONITOR ROOM BOYS TOO.
THE WHOLE DAMN PLACE WANTS THIS BUM TO SUFFER FOR WHAT HE DID TO BARBARA. ONLY *RIGHT* YOU SHOULD GET YOUR REVENGE.
THANKS, MAN APPRECIATED
TONY, COULD WE GET SOME LIGHTS IN FOUR-FIVE-ONE?

WHERE THE HELL'S HE GONE?
HAYDN, WHAT'S GOING ON DOWN HERE? SOMEBODY MOVE NORMAN OSBORN?
THE HELL ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? OSBORN'S SITTING THERE DOING A JIGSAW IN THE CORNER OF THE ROOM.
HADYN, SERIOUSLY. OSBORN ISN'T IN THIS CELL.
I'M TELLING YOU, MAN! HE'S SITTING IN HIS CHAIR AND DOING A JIGSAW. I'M LOOKING AT HIM RIGHT NOW!
OH, MY GOD.
WHAT?
HIT THE ALARMS!

WEEE

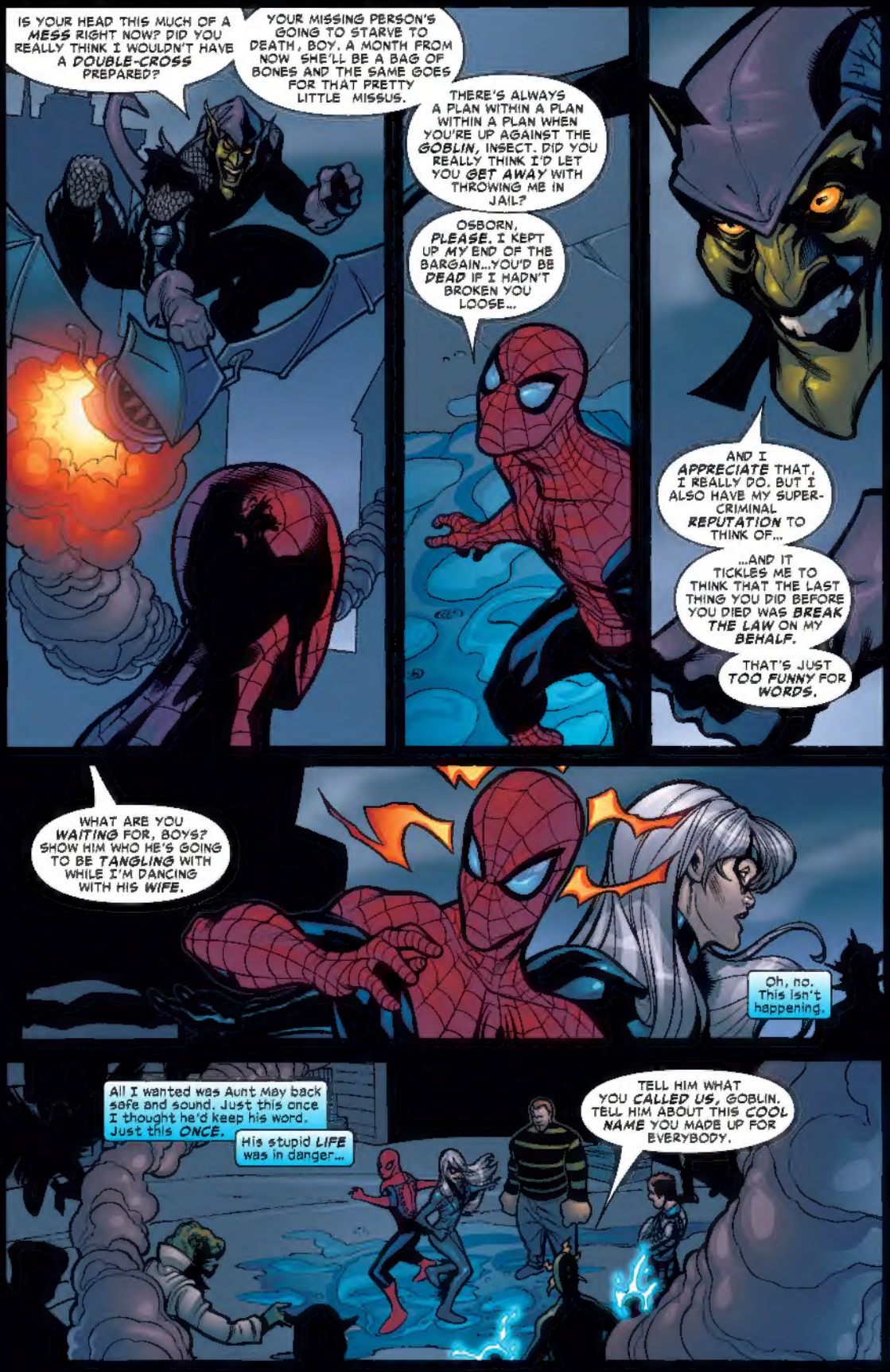
GUYS! LISTEN UP! IT'S JODIE DOWN IN DELTA TUNNEL! TELL THE C.O.S I GOT THE BREAK-OUTS! THEY'RE STANDING RIGHT HERE N--
RRRRRR--
HUHHNN!!
OSBORN!
FELICIA! GET AFTER HIM.
OH, MAN. LET ME SEE. LET ME TAKE A LOOK AT YOU HERE. CAN YOU TALK? CAN YOU BREATHE OKAY?
JUST DON'T TRY TO MOVE AND I'LL RADIO FOR--
FREEZE!
HE'S OKAY! I THINK HE JUST BROKE A COUPLE OF--

Stup d.
Not THINKING stra ght
Head's been fu l of cotton buds s nce Aunt May d sappeared, but that was WAY too c ose
JEEZUS! GET A MEDICAL TEAM DOWN HERE!
GUYS, THIS S TRAYNOR DOWN IN DELTA' CLOSE OFF THE EXIT NOW BEFORE THEY H T THE OPEN WATER!
Too late


KUHH!
Got their choppers out faster than expected but they still don't have a prayer.
I'll be three miles upriver before they even get their BEARINGS.
FELICIA. Oh, my God...
Relax, Parker. Have a little FAITH. She's been doing this for years and Osborn had both hands tied behind his back, right?
She isn't stupid enough to let him get away
Stay down among the trash. Don't look up at the light. Just let them comb the bay and move on. It's all going according to plan.
Just meet Osborn and Felicia where you SAID you would and he'll take you straight to Aunt May.
It was a risk I had to TAKE, Uncle Ben. Please don't be--

What the--?
Oh, my God
Oh my God
Oh my God

WHAT'S THE MATTER, SPIDER-MAN? SWALLOW A LITTLE WATER?
HYDRO-MAN... YOU IDIOT.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE...?
MAKING FIFTY GRAND AN HOUR, MORON. JUST LIKE THE SANDMAN'S MAKIN' FOR THIS LITTLE SHINDIG.
I'M SORRY, BABY. ONE OF THEM I COULD HAVE TAKEN ON MY OWN, BUT...
OH, PLEASE, FELICIA.
SPARE ME.
OH, MY GOD!
YOU KNOW YOUR TROUBLE, SPIDER-MAN? YOU ALWAYS THINK THE BEST OF PEOPLE.
YOU ALWAYS THINK THAT EVERYONE IS JUST AS NICE AS YOU ARE.


IS YOUR HEAD THIS MUCH OF A MESS RIGHT NOW? DID YOU REALLY THINK I WOULDN'T HAVE A DOUBLE-CROSS PREPARED?
YOUR MISSING PERSON'S GOING TO STARVE TO DEATH, BOY. A MONTH FROM NOW SHE'LL BE A BAG OF BONES AND THE SAME GOES FOR THAT PRETTY LITTLE MISSUS.
THERE'S ALWAYS A PLAN WITHIN A PLAN WITHIN A PLAN WHEN YOU'RE UP AGAINST THE GOBLIN, INSECT. DID YOU REALLY THINK I'D LET YOU GET AWAY WITH THROWING ME IN JAIL?
OSBORN, PLEASE. I KEPT UP MY END OF THE BARGAIN...YOU'D BE DEAD IF I HADN'T BROKEN YOU LOOSE...
AND I APPRECIATE THAT, I REALLY DO. BUT I ALSO HAVE MY SUPER-CRIMINAL REPUTATION TO THINK OF...
...AND IT TICKLES ME TO THINK THAT THE LAST THING YOU DID BEFORE YOU DIED WAS BREAK THE LAW ON MY BEHALF.
THAT'S JUST TOO FUNNY FOR WORDS.
WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR, BOYS? SHOW HIM WHO HE'S GOING TO BE TANGLING WITH WHILE I'M DANCING WITH HIS WIFE.
Oh, no. This isn't happening.
All I wanted was Aunt May back safe and sound. Just this once I thought he'd keep his word. Just this ONCE.
His stupid LIFE was in danger...
TELL HIM WHAT YOU CALLED US, GOBLIN. TELL HIM ABOUT THIS COOL NAME YOU MADE UP FOR EVERYBODY.

WELL, I THOUGHT THE SINISTER TWELVE HAD A CERTAIN CURIOUS APPEAL.

JUST A SHAME THE SCORPION NEVER APPEARED.

YOU GOTTA BE KIDDING ME, NORMAN. I JUST GOT HELD UP...
SCORPION?
THIS IS SPIDER-MAN'S LAST STAND, RIGHT?
I WOULDN'T HAVE MISSED THAT FOR THE WORLD.
TO BE CONTINUED...